

REMARKS

The Examiner's Office Action dated September 3, 2003 has been carefully reviewed. In view of the above amendments made to the claims and for the reasons provided below, early allowance of pending claims 1-18 is respectfully requested.

I. *Claim Rejections: 35 USC § 112*

1. 35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph Rejection

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 to 3 under 35 U.S.C. section 112, second paragraph. Specifically, the Examiner has pointed out that (1) since claim 1 and 2 do not end with a period, it is unclear as to where the claim ends; and (2) claim 3 is improper dependent claim.

With respect to the 112 rejection, claims 1 to 3 have been amended as set forth above to rectify the anomalies, as kindly pointed out by the Examiner, without adding any new matter. Accordingly, in view of the amendment to the claims as set forth above and the foregoing discussions, it is believed that the 112 rejections have now been overcome.

II. *Claim Rejection: 35 USC § 103*

The Examiner has rejected claim 3 under U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Makino et al., EP 1 106, 619 or US equivalent 6,368,807.

In response to the Examiner's 103(a) rejection, claim 3 has been deleted as set forth above.

Accordingly, it is firmly believed that the present invention defined in claims 1 and 2 is clearly patentable and unobvious over the cited reference.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and discussions, therefore, it is believed that pending claims 1 and 2 define a patentable invention and are now in full compliance with all the statutory requirements. Accordingly, it is earnestly requested that the Examiner's rejections be withdrawn and the pending claims be passed to issue

Respectfully submitted

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By: 

Richard B. Klar
Associate Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 31,385

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

Date of Deposit: December 23, 2003

I hereby certify that this AMENDMENT is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop: Non-Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

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